

# Australian Garden HISTORY



*Rough Sketch*

*Wignonia Cherere from Guiana.*

*The true colour of the flower is a  
shade or two deeper crimson and  
of Mangle. It is a magnificent  
climber and quite hardy.  
Would do splendidly on the  
large Arch.*

CELEBRATION AND CONSERVATION  
William Guilfoyle at Birregurra

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The Australian Garden History Society will be the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.

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National conference visitors at Tallaringa Gardens, Mt Tamborine.



Promoting AGHS at Cooliatla in the Southern Highlands.



(from left) Andrew Tomkins, owner of Cooliatla, Ros Craig, Dimity Tomkins and Chris Webb at Cooliatla.



Jenner, Barbara and Jackie relax on the pre-conference tour of the Darling Downs.



AGHS members enjoying the sun, the music and convivial conversation at Cooliatla.

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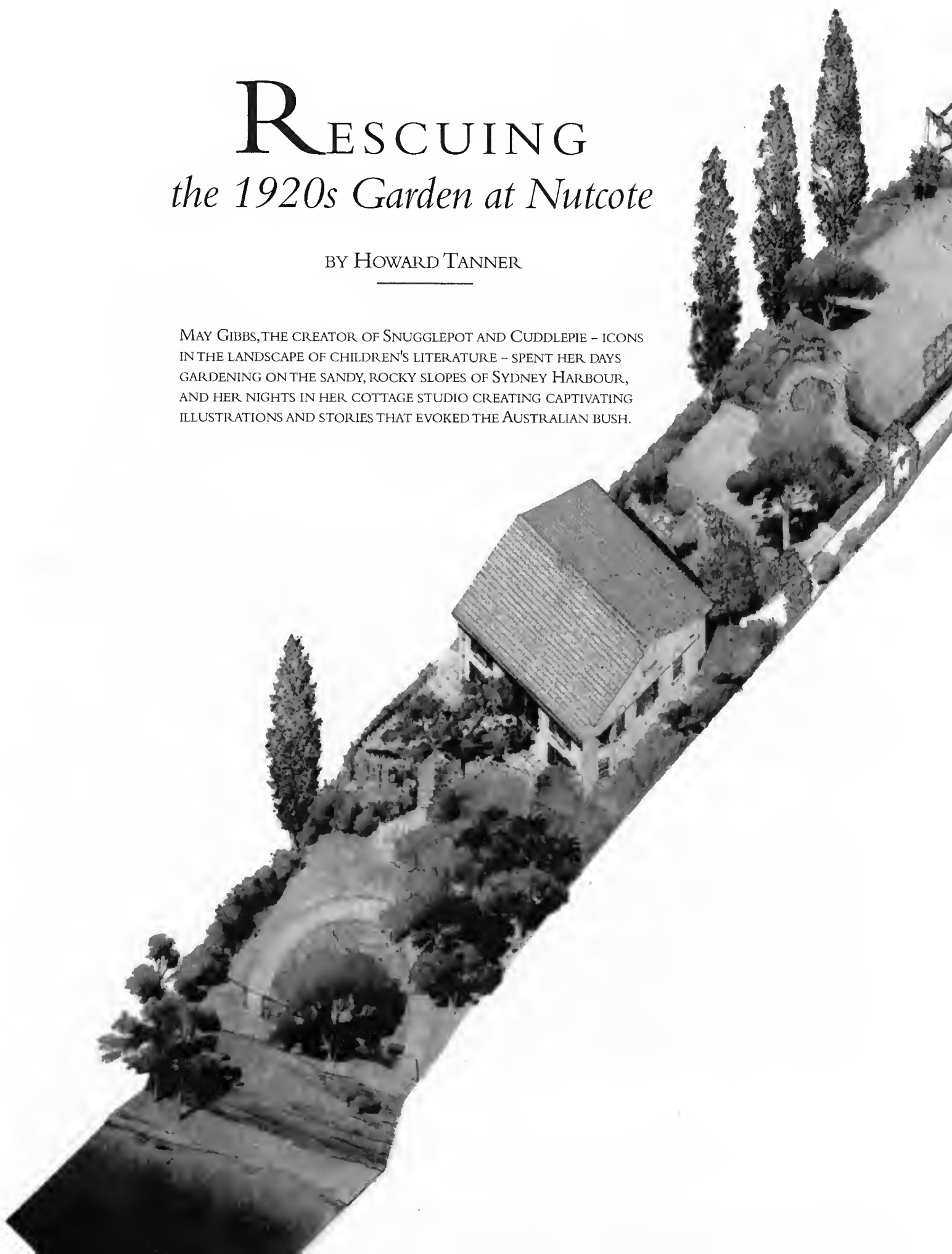
# RESCUING

## *the 1920s Garden at Nutcote*

BY HOWARD TANNER

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MAY GIBBS, THE CREATOR OF SNUGGLEPOT AND CUDDLEPIE – ICONS IN THE LANDSCAPE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE – SPENT HER DAYS GARDENING ON THE SANDY, ROCKY SLOPES OF SYDNEY HARBOUR, AND HER NIGHTS IN HER COTTAGE STUDIO CREATING CAPTIVATING ILLUSTRATIONS AND STORIES THAT EVOKED THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.





Helen Wood's article 'Restoring a Garden in the Image of its Creator' (*Australian Garden History*, Vol.15, No.1, July/August 2003, pp 4-8) provides a useful account of the maintenance and adaption of May Gibbs' garden during Helen's time (1996 - 2001) as garden curator at Nutcote. A border was widened, a hedge trimmed to remind one of a caterpillar seen in a humorous scene in a Gibbs cartoon, and a declining (but original) poplar replaced with a *Magnolia grandiflora*. Helen Wood and her team of volunteers have cared for the place, and have to some degree personalised the garden, always striving to reflect what 'May would have wanted'.

It is, I believe, essential for the record to provide the background to this story. May Gibbs died in 1969 and left the property to UNICEF. It then passed through various hands, before being saved from redevelopment through the intervention of concerned citizens and purchase by North Sydney Council, who set up the Nutcote Trust to administer the property. Architects Howard Tanner and Associates were appointed in 1992 to conserve and restore the house and its grounds. Megan Jones of our office undertook a very detailed Conservation Management Plan for the property which included measured studies by Tony Smith, an architectural assessment by Howard Tanner, historic research by Paul Ashton, Sue Rosen and Pauline Curby and a detailed evaluation of the garden by landscape architect Fiona Robbe. Historic drawings and photographs, letters and

diary entries helped establish architect B.J. Waterhouse's evolving designs for the house and May Gibbs' intentions for the garden.

The house was restored in 1993 as a museum and the garages amended in 1994 as a visitor centre with Megan Jones as project architect, and with the gardens being reinstated by Fiona Robbe. Some old roses and hydrangeas survived, and also a number of trees - banksia, casuarina, ficus and eucalypt - all native to the site. Fiona's landscape master plan prepared in 1993 contains all the primary elements evident in the garden today - the bordered brick path along the eastern boundary, the central roundel filled with iris, the lemon tree by the bedroom window, etc. Scott MacArthur of our office detailed the rose trellises and the lattice screen which frame the approach and give privacy to the north elevation.

In Sydney between the wars a distinctive garden style evolved, with lawns easing between rock outcrops and with existing angophoras and eucalypts sheltering new garden beds, often using featured plants and fertilisers as advocated by Hazelwood's celebrated nursery on the Epping road. Such landscapes are disappearing under the pressure of inner city redevelopment and the related reduction in natural open space. Nutcote and its garden reflects this taste and is an important survivor of another, earlier Sydney.



*Howard Tanner is a Sydney architect, and a founding member of the AGHS.*

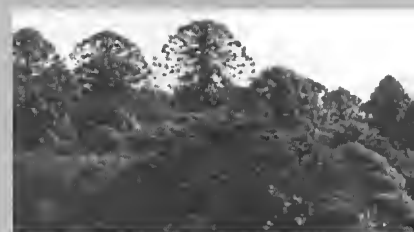




# *On Tour*

## DISCOVERING THE DARLING DOWNS AND BUNYA MOUNTAINS—PART 1

BY MARIE HOLLINGWORTH, JOAN LOW  
AND STUART READ



In fine, mild, early July weather a group of thirty-eight set out with Trish Dixon and Jackie Courmadias to visit four of the earliest gardens established on the Darling Downs and two newer ones. But the experience was much more than that. For Sydney botanist extraordinaire Stuart Read, the trip was an 'encounter with remarkable bunyas and bottle trees' to misquote Thomas Pakenham's wonderful book title. For Marie Hollingworth who grew up on the Darling Downs it was a 'recherche du temps perdu' and for Joan Low, from Perth it introduced gardening on the opposite side of the continent.

Geographically we made a sweeping arc inland from Brisbane travelling from south west to north west across a notable region of Queensland. It took us through Cunningham's Gap between Boonah and Warwick, climbed to the top of the range at Toowoomba, then swung westward through rolling downs to agricultural regions between Warwick, Toowoomba and Dalby and ascended into the cool green sub-tropical rainforest of the Bunya Mountain National Park. After returning to Toowoomba via country byways and tiny townships, we went north for a way, along the top of the Great Divide, before going through the Ravensbourne National Park into the Brisbane Valley near Esk. The return to Brisbane was along the inland side of the D'Aguilar Range which encompasses Brisbane Forest Park.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1827, a penal colony was established at Moreton Bay and no free settler was allowed within fifty miles of the settlement. Development of the Darling Downs started when Alan Cunningham led an expedition from the New England district, not from Brisbane. In 1828 he returned, sailing up the Brisbane River, and ultimately finding 'Cunningham's Gap', the pass to the Darling Downs.

Settlers followed, ever seeking pastures for their flocks and pushing further to the north and west. At first, they were able to lay claim to hundreds of thousands of acres. The Leslie

brothers were first to settle at Canning Downs near Warwick, in 1840, paying ten pounds for their extensive holding. They brought their five thousand merino sheep from Guyra without the loss of an animal. (Patrick had spent a year with the Macarthurs at Camden learning flock management). Later when demand for holdings increased, the Robertson Land Act took land from the squatters, thus breaking up these large holdings.

The original homesteads were small slab huts, later extended to meet family needs. Prosperity meant that grander homes could be built, and sometimes a gardener was employed to establish fine gardens, but changing fortunes, as with Jimbour House, could mean the properties fell into disrepair before being rescued and restored.

As well as the legacy of Aboriginal influences, as in place-names ('Old Gowrie' from Cowarie), many skilled immigrant groups also settled, opening stores, establishing vineyards, dairies, or coal mines. Many German place-names were changed during World War II due to ill feeling.

**Coochin Coochin** south of Boonah trumpeted its already distinctive ridge top locale with a hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*) which filled a horseshoe shaped courtyard where you enter the house. The Bells' grandchildren call this 'the faraway tree' for good reason. Up close the garden revealed succulent wonders, a huge clump of *Agave attenuata* with soft, grey-blue rosettes waist-high, and fishing rod flower spike arching over your head. A large 'queen of the night' cactus (*Selenicereus grandiflorus*) tumbled over a pergola behind, making a striking composition – just imagine that in flower.

The homestead (named for the black swans), was built in 1843 of red cedar throughout. The original house rests on entire cedar tree trunks as bearers. In 1870, using bullock and dray, the house was relocated 10km to its present site. After purchase by the Bell family, further rooms were added from 1900–1920, making a floor area of 100 squares, all still standing today.

Being merely a day's buggy ride from Brisbane many distinguished English guests visited Coochin Coochin to see some of 'the

outback'. Although there is not a lot of formal, established garden, a paddock planted with wonderful trees commemorates distinguished guests. There is no need for a visitor's book here. The plaques tell of visits by several members of royalty, including the Prince of Wales in 1920 and the Queen Mother in 1958, by authors such as Agatha Christie and by actors Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivian Leigh as well as all the state governors. This was a most interesting area to explore.

**Canning Downs** has three stories – that of the birth of the pastoral industry in Queensland, that of the Barnes family who have lived here since 1917 and that of visits to the property by Edna Walling whose remarkable niece Barbara Barnes welcomed us. While the real wonders were her book piles inside, outside a quietly elegant driveway avenue of clumps and drifts of boree/weeping myall (*Acacia pendula*) gave the effect of very vertical weeping willow or Chilean mayten trees. A double width pergola some 40m long sheltered sheets of Algerian iris (*Iris unguicularis* [*I. stylosa*]), maidenhair ferns and violets which would no doubt have pleased Edna Walling.

The garden dates back to the 1840s, though only a few early trees remain, including a deodar, Bunya pines, a river red gum painted by Conrad



feature won the admiration of Edna Walling when she visited her niece.

'Ceb' Barnes, Barbara's late husband, was a politician, stud horse breeder and pastoralist. Today, their son, Mitt Barnes is continuing the thoroughbred breeding program and the property is resplendent with new outbuildings, fresh paint and new fences. Barbara, whose passion is gathering knowledge on people and life via newspapers and many, many books, looked after her aunt, Edna Walling, when she moved to Buderim from Bickleigh Vale.

The avenue leading to Canning Downs homestead.

Courtesy: Stuart Read



Martens and a wisteria possibly planted by Emmeline, wife of Patrick's brother George. The tree-stump where the Leslies ate their first meal is preserved.

Some remnants of the original garden remain – the tile edging around a few garden paths now overgrown by grass – but a comprehensive display of archival photographs showed what the garden had once been like. Particularly impressive was the sweeping 360° panorama of the Downs. From the house only the elegant form of a simple fountain interrupted the view. This garden

**Jimbour House** near Dalby welcomed with a jacaranda avenue, but better still some whopping-boled bottle trees (*Brachychiton rupestris*) in a formal pair flanking the garden front. One is suffering beneath one of a pair of enormous Hill's figs (*Ficus hilli*) and has dropped a section of trunk showing its cubby-hole core. Round the back of the house was a 5m dome of orange-flowered nicodemia, *Buddleia madagascarensis* lovely silver-white felt under its leaves, and a dwarf orchid bush (*Bauhinia galpinii/natalensis*). On the pergola in front was



Left: Canning Downs - the fountain much admired by Edna Walling and Darling Downs beyond.

Courtesy: Trisha Dixon

Above: Edna Walling's niece, Barbara Barnes, talks with Pamela Polglase, from Sydney, in the kitchen of the old house at Canning Downs.

Courtesy: Trisha Dixon



The bottle tree at Jimbour House.  
Courtesy: Stuart Read

lush Rangoon creeper (*Quisqualis indica*), sadly without its ruby red flowers.

In 1841 this once extensive pastoral property, 238km from Brisbane was the most northern outpost of European settlement. Jimbour Station became a settlement of more than 200 people living and working on the property – including 45 shepherds to look after the sheep! The impressive two-storeyed sandstone residence, built in 1874 featured local timbers inside and slate roofing tiles imported from Wales. The trees were planted at this time.

The garden plan came into being after the Russell family purchased the property in 1881 and has developed with successive generations. Current innovations are the establishment of a 52acre vineyard producing a range of wines, and a 5000-capacity amphitheatre. The Russell family often host fundraising musical events to assist chosen charitable organisations.

A wonderful formal rose garden, being pruned by an army of gardeners, had archways that draw the eye first to a delightful fountain and then onward to the infinite vista of the Darling Downs. The vegetable garden alongside the old home had a great variety of flourishing vegetables – it would certainly feed more than the household.

Bunya pines characterise the crest of the Bunya Mountain Range.  
Courtesy: Stuart Read



Most agreed the highlight of the trip was driving through the **Bunya Mountains** where these monster trees from prehistoric times can be seen emerging as canopy trees over the lower growth lining the moister ridges, growing above sclerophyll eucalypt and hoop pine forest on lower, drier slopes. Named *Araucaria bidwillii* after John Carne Bidwill who popularised the tree by exporting seed and plants to England, perhaps it should have retained its original name of Petrie's pine for Andrew Petrie who first brought it to the colonial government's notice. Petrie was one of the Europeans to witness and join the large Aboriginal gatherings and feast on its nuts in 1840.

The Bunya Mountains form an isolated section of the Great Dividing Range, about 150km from the coast and reaching an elevation over 1100m in parts. They were of significance to Aborigines who traditionally gathered here for tribal ceremonies, hunting, mock fighting and corroborees when the bunya pine cones were mature.

From the 1860s until 1945, the fine subtropical softwoods of the Queensland Kauri, Hoop and Bunya Pines brought timber cutters and sawmills to the area. In 1908, an area of 9,303 hectares was gazetted as the Bunya Mountains National Park, the second national park in Queensland. Today, the park covers 11,700 hectares.

This area has long been a popular recreational destination, as evidenced by the many 'chalet-style' rental cottages, offering magnificent views. Lunching at Rosella's Eco Tourism Restaurant, we sampled a Bunya Nut meal – Bunya Nut Soup with Bunya Nut Bread, and Bunya Nut and Banana Cake! Delicious!

A brief, but invigorating walk through the bush following a creek as it tumbled down through a series of waterfalls revealed more botanical pleasures – the Gympie Gympie or Stinger tree (*Dendroomide moroides*) with hairy oval leaves larger than your hand, corky puckered bark and fast growth up to 15m tall. Reminiscent of New Zealand's whau or cork tree (*Entelea*) the sting of its hairy leaves is remedied by applying

the sap of the cunjevoi, a fleshy aroid-like taro (*Alocasia* sp.) which grows nearby. Also eye-catching in the forest were 3-4m high cabbage tree bushes of *Cordyline rubra* with large wide leaves and hanging bunches of lipstick scarlet berries like wrinkled glacé cherries.

Part Two of this account will follow in the next issue of 'Australian Garden History'.





*Rough sketch  
Bignonia Cherere from Guiana.  
The true colour of the flower is a  
chase or two deeper crimson and  
of course it is a magnificent  
climber and quite hardy.  
Would do splendidly on the  
large arch.*

Rough notebook sketch by Guilfoyle  
Bignonia Cherere from Guiana.  
'... It is a magnificent climber and quite hardy.  
Should do splendidly on the large arch.'  
From the La Trobe Collection, State Library of  
Victoria MS 11021.

One of the greatest essentials  
in landscape gardening is the  
variety of foliage and disposal  
of trees. Nothing can excel  
the glimpses afforded by the  
openings between naturally  
forming clumps of trees and  
shrubs, whose height and  
contrast of foliage have been  
studied.

William Guilfoyle  
10 August 1873

# TURKEITH AND MOOLERIC, BIRREGURRA

BY SUZANNE HUNT & ANNE COLMAN

The neighbouring properties of Mooleric and Turkeith are situated outside the Western District town of Birregurra, 45km west of Geelong in Victoria. The average maximum temperature for February is 27°C and for July is 12° C. Frosts are common from June to September and hot northerly winds challenge the gardener in summer, while the blustery south-westerly winds of winter often damage trees. The annual average rainfall is 21 inches with most rain falling in August and least in March. Soils in the area are shallow and somewhat stony, ranging from loam to clay with an average pH factor of 5.8.



First settled in the late 1830s these properties were originally part of larger holdings. Turkeith was a section of Mount Hesse station until 1861 when, under the requirements of the Nicholson Act, this large station was subdivided and Mooleric was part of the 21,717 acre Mount Gellibrand holding.

Guilfoyle's genius in the disposal of foliage and trees is apparent in the garden at Turkeith.

Courtesy: Marika Kocsis.

## THE HOMESTEADS AND THEIR OCCUPANTS

James Ford Strachan, the first owner of Mooleric, was an early Port Phillip settler, arriving in Melbourne in 1836. His son, also John Ford, rented the property from his father and the estate remained in the family until purchased by Ferdinand Felix Armytage in 1884.<sup>1</sup> Armytage had acquired Turkeith in the subdivision of Mount Hesse and lived there with his wife Annie Fairbairn and their children until his death in 1890. In 1899 Robert and Urquhart Ramsay purchased Mooleric and four years later acquired Turkeith with their cousin Thomas McKellar. The Ramsay brothers subsequently bought out their cousin's interest, each making one of the properties his own. Robert and Mabel Ramsay settled at Mooleric and Urquhart (Nall) and Janet Russell Kininmonth (from Mt. Hesse) settled at Turkeith.<sup>2</sup>

The Turkeith and Mooleric homesteads are both substantial bluestone homes built from local stone. Turkeith – and its outbuildings, a bluestone woolshed and a bluestone hut – was built in 1865



Above: Turkeith Homestead.  
Courtesy: La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Right: Lithograph of William Guilfoyle in *The Commercial Album of Victoria*, J. Gale Pottenger & Co. c. 1880.  
Courtesy: La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.

for Felix and Annie Armytage. The tennis court at the front of the house was commissioned by them and became the focus of many social events. Mooleric – and its bluestone woolshed, stables and other outbuildings – was built by the architects Davidson and Henderson in the 1870s. The tower was added in 1926, the brick wing in 1932 and the tennis court in 1940.<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century the lives of the occupants of both homesteads were intertwined, not only by their familial connections but also by their relationship with

William Robert Guilfoyle, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Guilfoyle was appointed to the position of Curator (later becoming Director) of the Melbourne Botanic Garden from 1873 – 1912. It was during his time at the helm that the gardens were transformed from a taxonomic collection of plants to a 'pleasure garden' incorporating large sweeps of lawn, picturesque views and winding pathways lined with interesting and exotic shrubberies. His landscape principles were consistent with contemporary public taste and the gardens continue to be admired today as one of the great landscape and horticultural achievements in Australia.

## GUILFOYLE AND HIS PRIVATE GARDEN LANDSCAPE DESIGN WORK

Guilfoyle's work at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens has been well documented but little research has yet been undertaken to determine the number of private gardens he was involved with – either by helping to lay out the whole site

or perhaps providing planting advice or supplying plant material. A few private



gardens such as Mooleric and Turkeith do have archives that support his involvement but many others rely on hearsay or a 'hunch' that they reflect the trademarks of his design skill. Just how many commissions Guilfoyle undertook may never be known but there

is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that it may have been considerable. In 1882, William Elliott the horticultural editor of the *Leader* publicly castigated Guilfoyle in an article for neglecting his role as Director in favour of designing gardens for wealthy patrons in the Western District.<sup>4</sup> Elliott's accusation – if true – does raise a point about Guilfoyle's right to act independently as a landscape gardener-designer outside the contract he had as Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, with the Victorian Government.

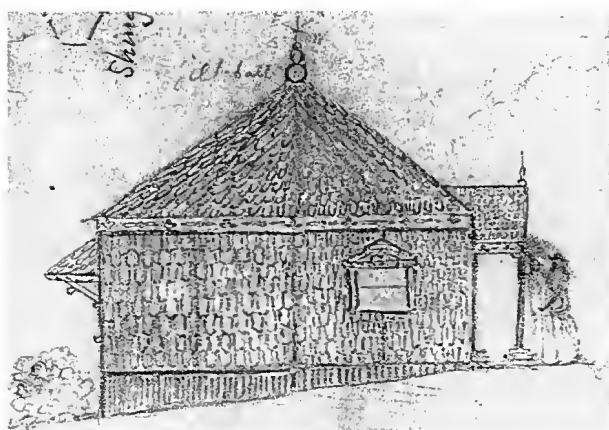
Under the Civil Service Act of 1862 and Public Service Acts of 1883 and 1890 Guilfoyle reported directly to the Secretary of Lands. His powers were arbitrary when disciplining staff and were restricted to reporting any infractions to the Secretary. A lack of absolute authority over staffing and other matters of garden management caused him a great deal of angst during his tenure. One incident involving the theft of some bulbs by a gardener in 1884 demonstrated not only

how difficult it was for Guilfoyle to maintain control but how powerful the Secretary was in making decisions regarding the removal of any plant material from the gardens. At the Board of Enquiry into the theft, the foreman Hendrick was called to give evidence. His statement revealed that it had always been Guilfoyle's policy to allow the workers to remove any unwanted plant material – within reason – for their own use.

The Board was not impressed to learn of Guilfoyle's indulgence. When their decision about the fate of the gardener was reached, a reprimand from Secretary Morrah was also directed at Guilfoyle ordering him to put a stop to the practice of, 'allowing employees in the Botanic Gardens to take away bulbs, cuttings, plants or other public property'.<sup>5</sup> Guilfoyle in his own defence denied any such knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

The Lands Department directive was very explicit. So how did Guilfoyle, himself an employee, manage to select, package up and send by rail and post, large quantities of seeds, cuttings and plant material to various clients – including his friends the Ramsays – without attracting attention from the Department? Unfortunately records relating to the propagating department at the gardens have been lost. And any evidence surrounding payments that Guilfoyle may have received for this work have also not been located. Part of the answer may be gleaned from the type of person Guilfoyle was and in particular, his philosophical view of the value of plants and gardens in fostering a civilised attitude to life.

Guilfoyle possessed very strong opinions about how the gardens should be managed and developed. His attitude towards the staff was dictatorial and he did not suffer fools gladly. And



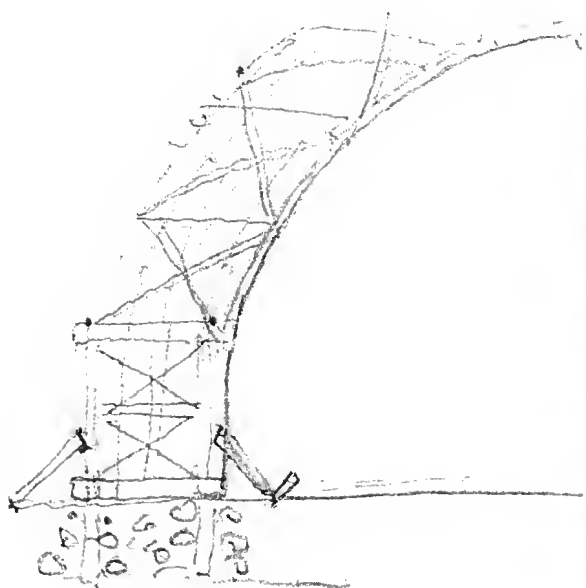
  
Botanic Gardens, Melbourne.

12 April 1904

My dear Mrs Ramsay  
In order that you  
may deal with one  
lot of plants at a  
time, I am sending  
by train today or  
tomorrow the 20 kinds  
of choice climbing  
(cuttings) Pelargoniums. By so  
doing you will be  
able to put them  
about the grounds

Above: William Guilfoyle's sketch for a timber shingle bush house for the garden at Mooleric c. 1903. The structure was never built. Courtesy: The La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Letter written by William Guilfoyle to Mrs Robert Ramsay in 1904. Courtesy: The La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.



Above: Archway, Mooleric 2002.  
Courtesy: Suzanne Hunt.

Left: Sketch of an arch by Guilfoyle for the garden at Mooleric c. 1903  
Courtesy: The La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.



Park-like lawns, tropical foliage and clumps of trees of different heights at Mooleric (left) and Turkeith (right).

Courtesy: Suzanne Hunt.



given the number of friendships with rich landowners he fostered around country Victoria it is obvious that he enjoyed the prominent position he held in the community. In 1884 Guilfoyle became a committee member of the Kalizotic Society.<sup>7</sup> The aim of the society was to engage a cross section of Melbourne's cultural and business people in aesthetics. As a member he rubbed shoulders with the likes of James Smith, an art critic for the *Argus*, George Folingsby, Master of the Art School at The National Gallery of Victoria, and captains of industry, such as George Reid. Restoring beauty to the city and its environs from the foul smelling mess it had become was a prime motivation for the group. Guilfoyle, inspired by this notion, may have felt it was his duty to educate as many people as possible through his public and private work. He is known to have given demonstration classes at the Botanic Gardens and in a progress report in 1887 he wrote to Secretary Morrah:

*The distribution of plants of useful and economic value has been continued during the year. Numerous correspondents have been supplied with plants, seeds etc of such; for experimental culture with the object of encouraging, the growth of any likely, to prove of industrial value to the colony.*<sup>8</sup>

Motivated by the aesthetic movement espoused by the Kalizotic Brotherhood and the conviction of a strong personality, Guilfoyle may have been prepared to defy the directive of the Lands Department. How he successfully managed to thwart its directive and conduct private commissions on such a large scale remains a mystery and requires further investigation. His close friendship with the Ramsay family however was the main reason for his involvement with laying out the gardens at Turkeith and Mooleric.

#### GUILFOYLE CREATES THE GARDENS AT MOOLERIC AND TURKEITH

Watts in his seminal work, *Historic Gardens of Victoria*, includes the comment that Guilfoyle regarded Mooleric as his 'best' small private garden.<sup>9</sup> In an attempt to understand what he meant by this remark it is useful to compare some of the elements of style and horticultural endeavour found at Mooleric – and indeed at Turkeith – with the landscape design he executed at the Botanic Gardens.

On a plant collecting trip to the South Sea Islands aboard H.M.S. *Challenger* in 1868 Guilfoyle became impressed with the tropical vegetation he encountered. His love of palms and other subtropical foliage was later used to great effect in all his gardens and his understanding about the importance of trees and foliage was expressed in the following terms in his monthly report soon after he took up his post in 1873:

*One of the greatest essentials in landscape gardening is the variety of foliage and disposal of trees. Nothing can excel the glimpses afforded by the openings between naturally forming clumps of trees and shrubs, whose height and contrast of foliage have been studied. At every step the visitor finds some new view – something fresh, lively and striking especially when tastefully arranged. Where long sombre rows of trees are planted, and a sameness of foliage exists the very reverse is the case. Nature's most favourable aspects then seem sacrificed to art, and that art produces a chilling effect.*<sup>10</sup>

His theory to recreate nature whilst at the same time entice the eye towards vistas and spaces is a hallmark of all three gardens. The type of bed he constructed is also a special feature. All Guilfoyle's beds are asymmetrical or arabesque in shape. This clever ploy meant that plants of differing heights and foliage could be used



throughout the bed to be viewed from all angles – each one offering a different perspective of the garden. The other key feature that defines his style is the enormous variety of plant material he used and his love of curved paths and driveways.

When discovering the joys of the private gardens at Mooleric and Turkeith it is these key elements – bed shape, placement and variety of trees and foliage that immediately bring to mind a sense of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, albeit on a minor scale.

Letters written to Mrs Ramsay at Mooleric between 1903 and Guilfoyle's death in 1912 are held in the State Library of Victoria. Another valuable source of primary evidence, documenting his involvement with both

recommended that the seeds be watered with warm water once a week until germination occurred. In a letter dated 22 July 1903 Guilfoyle boasted that he was able to send her some Wine Palm seeds – the first ever collected from a mature tree at the gardens. In the past this tree had proven too much for the thieving larrikins who stole the ripe fruit before it could be collected!

Over the next eight years vast quantities of plant material eventually found its way from the Botanic Gardens nursery to Mooleric and Turkeith. A rockery and pond were also added at Mooleric after a design by Guilfoyle and a rustic arbour was suggested but never implemented. No doubt under the careful eye of Guilfoyle both gardens developed well. Individual touches



Guilfoyle's love of curved paths is apparent at Mooleric (left) and Turkeith (right).  
Courtesy: Suzanne Hunt.

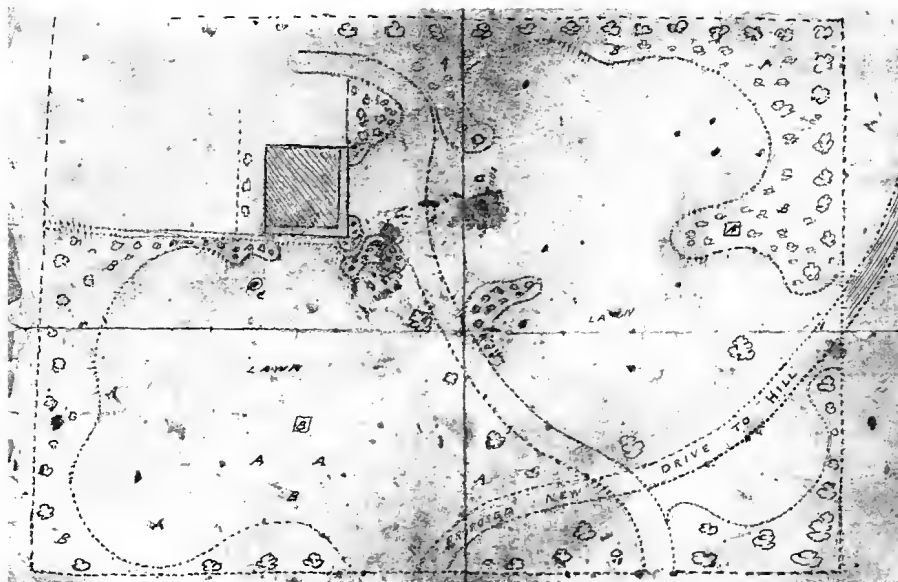
properties are diary entries in Farm Work Books held at Turkeith. Mooleric was laid out in 1903 and Turkeith some time after.<sup>11</sup> Starting a garden at this period of time involved a great deal of patience and horticultural know-how. Mrs Ramsay, unlike gardeners today, did not have the luxury of being given potted up specimens. She received – by train or mail – plant cuttings that needed to be struck and seeds that required germination.<sup>12</sup> Luckily for her Guilfoyle provided careful instructions about where to place plant material and recipes for successful seed propagation. During 1903 Guilfoyle sent batches of Palm seeds. One lot was for the Date Palm, *Jubea*, which he recommended be 'steeped in boiling water for twenty minutes and then buried at once in 2 inches of soil'.<sup>13</sup> He further

cannot be omitted however as the owners sought to impart their own imprint upon the landscape.

#### CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Robert Ramsay of Mooleric and Urquhart Ramsay of Turkeith both died in 1948. In 1962 Mooleric was divided between Robert Ramsay's sons, Robert and Andrew while Janet Ramsay, her two daughters and a manager tended Turkeith. When Janet died in 1967, her daughter Isabella and a succession of managers ran the property until Janet Ramsay's grand daughter, Janet Gordon and her husband Lachlan purchased the property in 1986.<sup>14</sup> Mooleric remained in the Robert Ramsay family until purchased by Bill Gillies and Maryjane Crabtree in 1999.





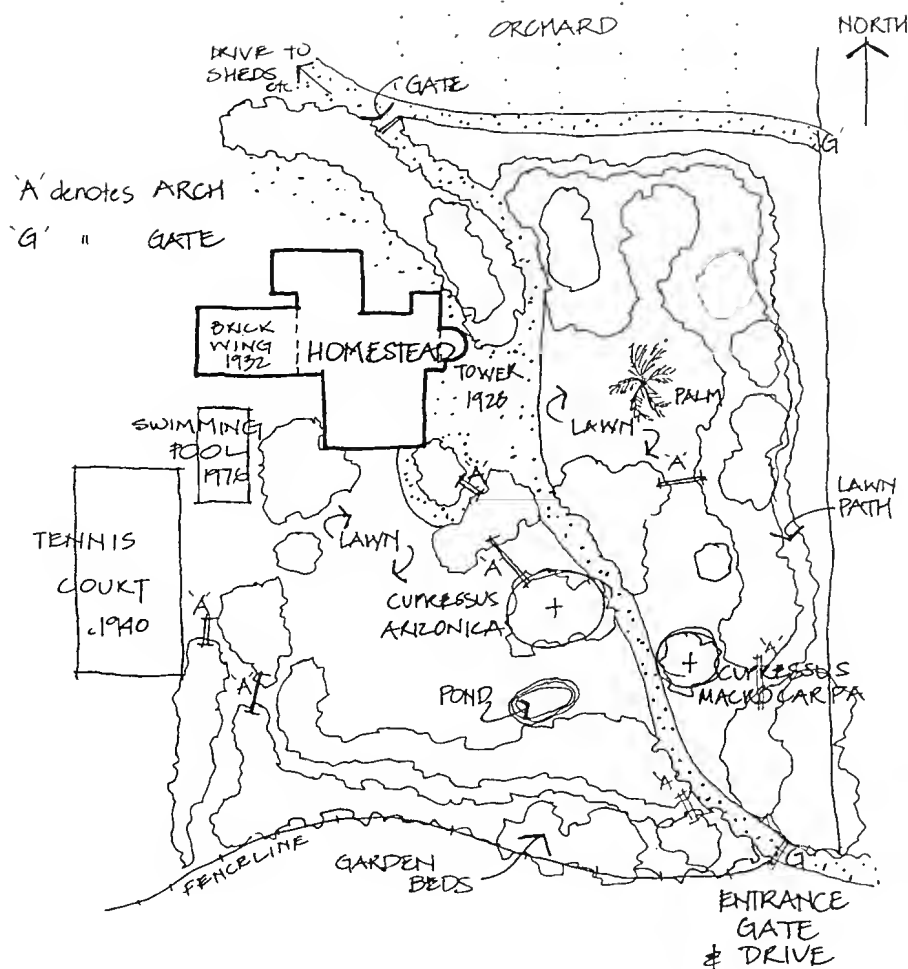
William Guilfoyle's sketch plan for the garden at Mooleric.  
 Courtesy: The La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Guilfoyle's sketch of pond for water lilies for garden at Mooleric c. 1903.  
 Courtesy: The La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Handwritten notes in the top right corner of the page, partially cut off.



The pond at Mooleric in 2002.  
 Courtesy: Suzanne Hunt.



A conceptual plan to indicate the present general layout and boundaries of the garden at Mooleric. Redrawn 1993 from AHC sketch  
 Courtesy: Francine Giffedder.



Above and centre: Guilfoyle played with perspective. Both Mooleric and Turkeith have vistas – within various sections and through the landscape to the distance.



# GUILFOYLE PLANT LISTS TURKEITH

1905, 1906 AND 1907

## 1905 Plant lists from by W. Guilfoyle

As written by Guilfoyle

Current botanical name

Introduced

<i>Salvia fulgens</i>	<i>Salvia fulgens</i>	1877
<i>Salvia nutilans</i>	<i>Salvia elegans</i>	N/L
<i>Salvia bonfire</i>	<i>Salvia poss. splendens</i>	N/L
<i>Salvia patens</i>	<i>Salvia patens</i>	1855
<i>Salvia azurea</i>	<i>Salvia azurea</i>	1855
<i>Salvia grahami</i>	<i>Salvia microphylla</i>	1876
<i>Salvia purpurea</i>	<i>Salvia purpurea</i>	1876
<i>Salvia stuttgart</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Salvia hoveyi</i>	<i>Salvia ianthina</i>	1882
<i>Salvia bethelii</i>	<i>Salvia involucrata</i> 'Bethelii'	1886
<i>Salvia Verschaffeltii</i>	<i>Salvia verschaffelti</i>	1886
<i>Nerium Delphine</i>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Delphine'	1882
<i>Nerium Mlle Dubois</i>	<i>Nerium</i> 'Madame Dubois'	1889
<i>Nerium splendens</i>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Splendens'	1882
<i>Coprosma Baueri Variegata</i>	<i>Coprosma repens</i> 'Variegata'	1873
<i>Metersideros speciosa</i>	poss. <i>Metersideros excelsa</i>	1855
<i>Abutilon Golden Fleece</i>	<i>Abutilon</i> 'Golden Fleece'	1889
<i>Abutilon Niveum</i>	<i>Abutilon niveum</i> cv.	1889
<i>Abutilon Megaponticum</i>	<i>Abutilon megaponticum</i>	1873
<i>Abutilon Vitifolium</i>	<i>Corynabutilon vitifolium</i>	1865
<i>Abutilon Hartmanii</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Abutilon Variegatum</i>	<i>A. megaponticum</i> 'Variegatum'	1873
	or form of <i>A. pictum</i>	1876
<i>Abutilon Swaitzii</i> (variegated)	<i>Abutilon hybridum</i> 'Savitzii'	1855
<i>Abutilon Thompsonii</i>	<i>Abutilon pictum</i> 'Thompsonii'	1873

## 1906 Plant Lists from W. Guilfoyle

<i>Stokesia cyanea</i>	<i>Stokesia laevis</i>	N/L
<i>Strobilanthe anisophylla</i>	<i>Strobilanthes anisophyllus</i>	1855
<i>Phlomis fruticosa</i>	<i>Phlomis fruticosa</i>	N/L
<i>Gunnera scabra</i> Peru	poss. <i>Gunnera manicata</i>	N/L
<i>Magnolia purpurea</i> Japan	<i>Magnolia quinquepeta</i>	1855
<i>Calceolaria floribunda</i>	prob. <i>Calceolaria crenatiflora</i>	1860
<i>Lychnis viscaria</i>	<i>Lychnis viscaria</i>	1873
<i>Swainsonia galegifolia</i> (2)	<i>Swainsonia galegifolia</i>	1860
<i>Aster Bowiei</i> and <i>rotundifolia</i>	Unknown - poss. <i>A. capensis rotundifolius</i>	N/L
<i>Browallia speciosa</i>	<i>Browallia speciosa</i>	N/L
<i>Tanselinieria californica</i>	<i>Zauschneria californica</i>	1860
<i>Corylus purpurea avellana</i>	<i>Corylus avellana</i> 'Fusco-rubra'	1865
<i>Russelia juncea</i> Mexico	<i>Russelia equisetiformis</i>	1855
<i>Abutilon megaponticum</i>	<i>Abutilon megaponticum</i>	1873
<i>Cytisus canariensis</i>	<i>Cytisus canariensis</i>	1857
<i>Papaver spicatum</i>	<i>Papaver spicatum</i>	N/L
<i>Mimulus glutinosus</i>	<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>	1855
<i>Bougainvillea Traillei</i>	Unknown - poss. a cultivar	N/L
<i>Bougainvillea Sanderiana</i>	<i>Bougainvillea glabra</i> 'Sanderana'	1889
<i>Fuchsia triphylla</i>	<i>Fuchsia triphylla</i>	N/L
<i>Corokia buddliodes</i>	<i>Corokia buddleioides</i>	N/L
<i>Tecoma smithii</i>	<i>Tecoma alata</i>	1889
<i>Tecoma mackena</i>	<i>Podranea ricasoliana</i>	1886
<i>Cordyline australis</i> (seedlings)	<i>Cordyline australis</i>	1855
<i>Nerium Delphine</i> (2)	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Delphine'	1882
<i>Calliandra Tweedii</i>	<i>Calliandra tweedii</i>	1860
<i>Cuphea ignea</i>	<i>Cuphea ignea</i>	1855
<i>Saxifraga sarmentosa</i>	<i>Saxifraga stolonifera</i>	1864
<i>Saxifraga rotundifolia</i>	<i>Saxifraga rotundifolia</i>	1855
<i>Hydrangea argentea</i>	poss. <i>H. argentea variegata</i>	1873
<i>Penstemon spectabilis</i>	<i>Penstemon spectabilis</i>	N/L
<i>Penstemon barbatus</i>	<i>Penstemon barbatus</i>	1855
<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	N/L
<i>Verbena 'Kestrel'</i> Incomparable	poss. <i>Verbena</i> 'Kestrel'	1855
<i>Eucalyptus calophylla rosea</i>	<i>Eucalyptus calophylla</i> var. <i>rosea</i>	
<i>Statice macrophylla</i>	<i>Limonium macrophyllum</i>	
<i>Iberis semperflorens</i>	<i>Iberis semperflorens</i>	
<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>	<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>	N/L
<i>Chrysanthemum tripterum</i>	Unknown	

TENDS TO GET SWAMPY  
AROUND HERE

ARE SHELTER BELT BEGINNING  
TO SHOW SIGNS OF SENESCENCE

BULB Paddock

TENNIS COURT  
SURFACE HAS CRACKED  
& LIFTED

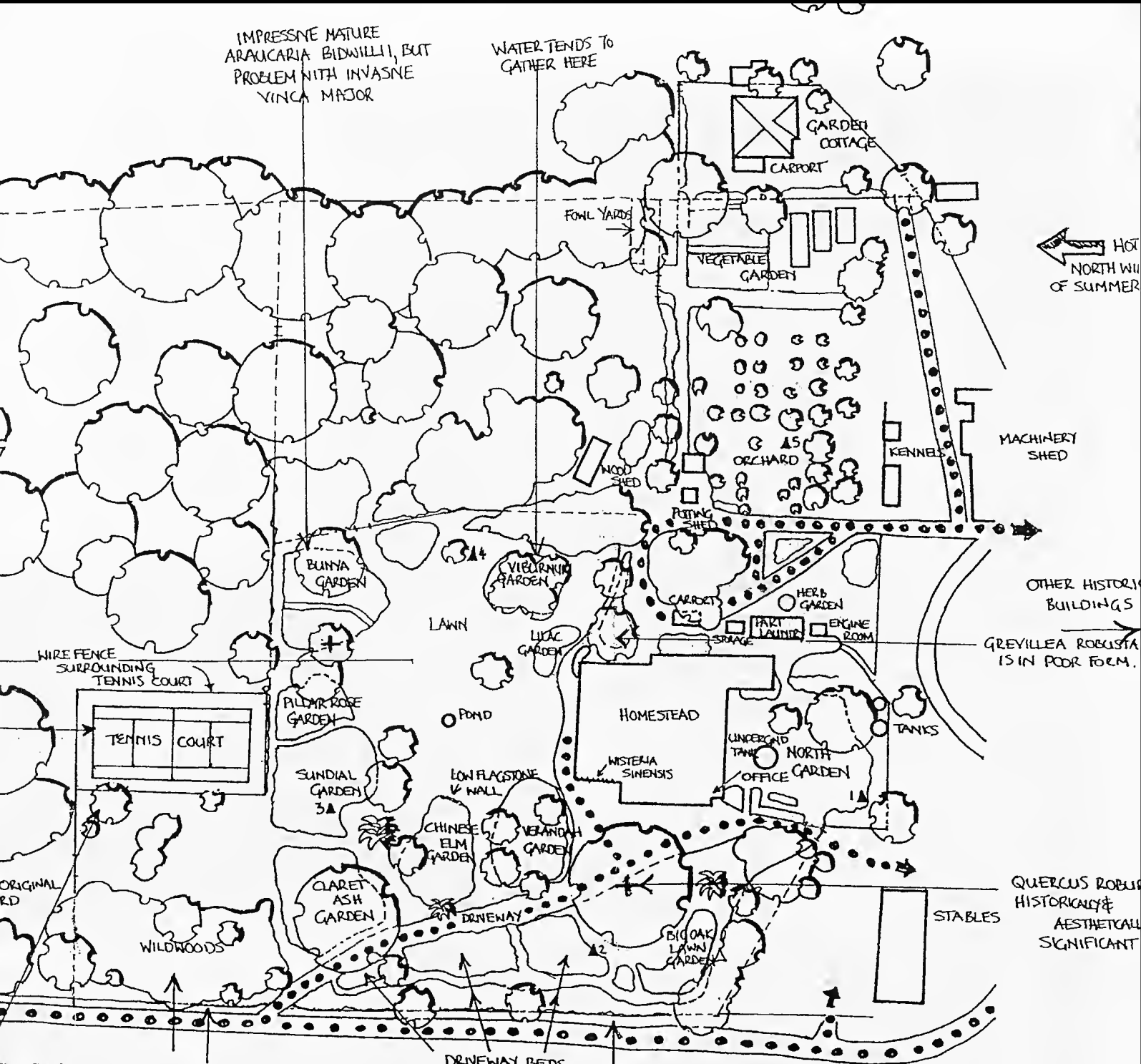
EXISTING STONE  
FENCE

3 REMAINING  
THE MORUS  
GOOD  
HISTORICAL

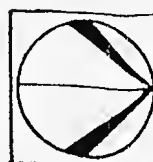
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SIGNIFICANT





KEY	
▲	SOIL SAMPLE
●	CIRCULATION
↗	SIGNIFICANT VIEWS
+	FOCAL POINT



DRAWN: MARIKA KOCIS  
DATE: JUNE, 1997  
SCALE: 0 10 20

## SITE ANALYSIS TURKEITH



Left: Giant Cactus at Turkeith.  
Courtesy Suzanne Hunt.

Far left: Palms were a favourite subject in Guilfoyle's garden designs. They flourished at Mooleric.  
Courtesy Suzanne Hunt.

<i>Cannas</i> 'Iberia', 'Mrs K. Gray', 'Robert C(r)oen', 'Koningen Charlotte', 'Alice Guilfoyle' 'Evolution Mont Blanc'	Unknown cultivars	N/L
<i>Rosa Brunoni</i> (cuttings)	<i>Rosa brunonii</i>	
<i>Strelitzia angusta</i>	<i>Strelitzia alba</i>	1857
<i>Strelitzia juncea</i>	<i>Strelitzia reginae</i> var. <i>juncea</i>	1857
<i>Strelitzia regina</i>	<i>Strelitzia reginae</i>	1857
<i>Acanthus</i>	poss. <i>Acanthus mollis</i>	
<i>Populus monilifera aurea</i>	<i>Populus x canadensis</i> 'Serotina Aurea'	1864
<i>Erythrina indica</i>	<i>Erythrina indica</i> or <i>E. sykesii</i>	N/L
<i>Solanum azureum</i>	poss. <i>Solanum arboreum</i>	1860

#### 1906 (October) Abutilon Lists from W. Guilfoyle

<i>Abutilon Niveum</i>	<i>Abutilon nivium</i>	1889
<i>Abutilon Venosum</i>	<i>Abutilon venosum</i>	1885
<i>Abutilon Molle</i>	poss. <i>Abutilon mollissimum</i>	N/L
<i>Abutilon Armand Canway</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Abutilon Aurelia</i>	<i>Abutilon</i> 'Aurelia'	1882
<i>Abutilon Boule de neige</i>	<i>Abutilon</i> 'Boule de Neige'	1876
<i>Abutilon Cerise unique</i>	poss. <i>Abutilon carmineum</i>	1876
<i>Abutilon Eclipse</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Abutilon Hero of Magdala</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Abutilon Hibiscus</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Abutilon Lilaceum album</i>	<i>Abutilon</i> 'Lilacea Alba'	1882
<i>Abutilon Lady of the Lake</i>	<i>Abutilon</i> 'Lady of the Lake'	1882
<i>Abutilon Louis Delaux</i>	poss. <i>Abutilon</i> 'Louis Delaux'	1882
<i>Abutilon Souv. de Bonne</i>	Unknown cultivar	1882
<i>Abutilon Boule di Or</i>	<i>Abutilon</i> 'Buisson d'Or' Unknown	N/L
<i>Abutilon Striatum</i>	<i>Abutilon pictum</i>	1855

#### 1907 (28 March) Plant Lists from W. Guilfoyle

<i>Fuchsia triphylla</i>	<i>Fuchsia triphylla</i>	N/L
<i>Escallonia montervidensis</i>	<i>Escallonia bifida</i>	
<i>Escallonia macrantha</i>	<i>Escallonia rubra</i> var. <i>macrantha</i>	
<i>Lasiandra macrantha</i>	<i>Tibouchina semidecandra</i>	N/L
<i>Lasiandra sarmentosa</i>	<i>Tibouchina</i> sp.	
<i>Bougainvillea Traillei</i> (2)	Unknown – poss. a cultivar	N/L
<i>Browallia jamesonii</i>	<i>Streptosolen jamesonii</i>	
<i>Diervilla candida</i>	<i>Weigela florida</i> 'Candida'	N/L
<i>Magnolia obovata purpurea</i>	poss. <i>Magnolia hypoleuca</i>	N/L
<i>Ceanothus azureus</i>	<i>Ceanothus coeruleus</i>	
<i>Michelia champaca</i>	<i>Michelia champaca</i>	N/L
<i>Rhus succedanea</i>	<i>Rhus succedanea</i>	
<i>Virgilia capensis</i>	<i>Virgilia capensis</i>	1857
<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium Varieg</i>	<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i> 'Variegatum'	
<i>Erythrina Hancoonii</i>	Unknown	N/L
<i>Erythrina Crista Galli</i>	<i>Erythrina crista-galli</i>	1855
<i>Tecoma Smithii</i> (2)	<i>Tecoma alata</i>	
<i>Phaseolus caracalla</i>	<i>Phaseolus caracalla</i>	
<i>Escallonia organensis</i>	<i>Escallonia laevis</i>	1857
<i>Clethra arborea</i>	<i>Clethra arborea</i>	1886
<i>Duranta stenostachyia</i>	<i>Duranta stenostachyia</i>	N/L
<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	1860
<i>Grevillea lavandulacea</i>	<i>Grevillea lavandulacea</i>	N/L
<i>Banksia</i> var. <i>Forsteri</i>	<i>Grevillea banksii</i> var. <i>forsteri</i>	N/L
<i>Strelitzia juncea</i>	<i>Strelitzia reginae</i> var. <i>juncea</i>	1857
<i>Bursaria pantonii</i> (3)	Unknown	N/L
<i>Chorozeuma cordata</i>	<i>Chorozeuma cordatum</i>	1860
<i>Mandevilla suaveolens</i>	<i>Mandevilla laxa</i>	1857
<i>Nerium Delphine Pink</i>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Delphine'	
<i>Nerium Splendens</i>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Splendens'	1855
<i>Nerium Mme Peyre</i>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Madame Peyre'	
<i>Nerium Coarctum</i>	Unknown	
<i>Nerium Grandiflorum Album</i>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Album' Grandiflorum	

#### Lists from Marika Kocsis

Isabella (Kate) Ramsay, her pet brolga and her mother, Janet sitting in front of the Sundial Bed c. late 1930s.  
Courtesy: Janet Gordon.



The garden at Mooleric 2002.  
Courtesy Suzanne Hunt.



Guilfoyle's influence on the state of the two gardens was pervasive. In his annual report of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens in 1876, Guilfoyle wrote that:

*One of the principle features in my original design was the creation throughout the gardens of spacious lawns... thus giving to suitable places a Park-like appearance.*<sup>15</sup>

It was a feature which he used constantly in his private gardens – evident at Turkeith and Mooleric – and which was maintained by the occupants of both properties. Guilfoyle played with perspective. The lawns and garden beds can be metaphorically described as resembling a sea surrounded by islands – a park-like lawn surrounded by islands of trees graded in height and under-planted with feature plants of mixed foliage. Indigenous plants from local properties were planted along with camellias from nurserymen in New South Wales and exotic overseas trees like the golden spindle tree from Japan.<sup>16</sup> Both gardens have vistas – within various sections and through the landscape to the distance.

Today at Mooleric the five acre garden remains faithful to its original design, apart from the removal of some large trees on the western and southern boundaries. The original cypress-lined sweeping drive is still extant, as are the rock-edged islands of gardens, and various plants ordered by Guilfoyle, such as *Plumbago auriculata*, still exist. The loss of windbreaks, and large cypress and pine trees in the 1944 bushfire are the biggest changes to the garden. When the tower was added to the house in 1926 a gravel driveway

next to it was also added, while in 1940 a tennis court was built to the south-west of the house and in 1976 a swimming pool. The garden, nevertheless, retains Guilfoyle's key elements of winding driveways and paths, shrubberies, mixed colourful foliage, drought-tolerant plants, arbours and the pond.

Similarly, Turkeith reflects Guilfoyle's original purpose to create a showpiece. The sweeping driveway, highlighted by a freestone wall remains, as do the curving garden beds around the large lawn and the winding pathways as at Mooleric. Changes that came to the garden after the death of Janet Ramsay – most notably the planting of many trees in the lawn and the gradual decline of the garden – have been arrested by much hard labour. And so the garden again demonstrates the spatial, colourful landscape designed by Guilfoyle. The islands of shrubberies, the vibrant garden beds and glorious trees such as the *Quercus robur* (English oak) by the front gate flourish as Guilfoyle had intended. The orchard and kitchen garden to the west of the homestead are extant and well used.

#### PRESERVING GUILFOYLE'S VISION

The farm books and letters recording the daily activities at Turkeith and Mooleric demonstrate how faithfully the Ramsays carried out Guilfoyle's recommendations. Janet Ramsay, on 9 August 1909, introduced a new gardener to work in the gardens at Turkeith, while she herself spent the day pruning in the orchard.<sup>17</sup> When Guilfoyle paid a visit on 14 March 1910 and advised 'more trees on the E side – must shut out stable. Pegged out pergola and opening through bed under oak tree – path around Tamarisk', subsequent entries note the progress of the work.<sup>18</sup> Janet Ramsay and a succession of gardeners laboured for 40 years to maintain the islands of garden beds with their colourful mix of annuals, perennials and exotics, so that by the 1950s Guilfoyle's vision was evident. Janet Gordon, Ramsay's grand daughter, and her husband Lachlan are infused with the same determination to maintain Guilfoyle's vision. Similarly, the Mooleric Ramsays maintained their garden and, by the end of their ownership, it was noted for its state and national significance. Maryjane Crabtree and Bill Gillies, the current owners, are also enthused to preserve their unique landscape.

Conservation and management plans have been written for both properties, and significant help has been extended by organisations such as the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Australian Garden History Society.<sup>19</sup> The latter conducts regular working bees at both properties, the labour provided by garden lovers who are determined to aid in the preservation of such significant landscapes.





Top: Aloes at Turkeith 2002.  
Courtesy: Suzanne Hunt.

Above: Dry stone wall at the  
entrance to Turkeith.  
Courtesy: Suzanne Hunt.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Threatened Roses

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY PATRICIA TOOLAN

Over time older and remote cemeteries have become rich repositories of remnant native grasses, shrubs and trees. They may also include early plantings of roses, bulbs and other symbolic plants that the early European settlers planted on the graves of their loved ones. With the passage of time and the increased use of herbicides we are continually losing more of these plant treasures.

Looking at the history behind old plantings we find that when the early settlers arrived in this distant land they brought with them their supplies, tools and all that they needed to start a new life in an unknown and often alien country. But they also brought 'reminders' of their homeland in the form of plants. These may have been bulbs, seeds, or slips of loved roses. These they planted on their new and often isolated farms. Such plants became a comfort in times of loneliness. The perfume of a rose, daffodil or lilac brings back, in an instant, familiar surroundings or memories of times past.

Particular old varieties of roses and plants often recur in the same locality suggesting that cuttings and seeds were shared between friends, neighbours or relatives. These gardens of shared plants became a treasure trove of fond memories. A wander around a garden formed in this way can evoke happy and powerful feelings. Miss Hatch, the Missies Light or Miss Ackland may now have gone but their plants live on in another's garden. Many roses have become family heirlooms passed down from mother to daughter over several generations.

Old cottages or a lonely farmhouse can be found with a gnarled rose bush near the front door. What a tale that rose could tell if only it could speak. When a family member died a piece of that cherished rose or some loved bulbs from the garden may have been planted on the grave. The early and untimely death of a young child must have been heart wrenching, and what better way to help ease the pain than to plant a rose. This



was often a small-flowered variety. Visiting and tending that rose while reflecting on the life of the child and then seeing the rose develop into a living memorial to their lost one must have helped to alleviate and ease the pain of loss.

Over time these living memorials became tangible links to our past. As such they deserve the respect that they have earned by surviving our harsh climate and lack of later care. Many of these roses are old varieties and cultivars that have been lost to commerce. They may be the only example of that rose left today. How many roses on these graves survive to this day? I venture to say – not many. If our climate has not killed them, then the later use of herbicides to clean up cemeteries has certainly meant the death knell to many cemetery plantings, and to the native grasses that had found a refuge there.

Revisiting old cemeteries over the past 25 years has shown me that we have few of these old plantings left. They are fast disappearing. We all

Top: Early unknown Hybrid Tea Rose on the grave of C.W. Ellis (died 1 June 1922) at the Mitcham Anglican Cemetery, South Australia, 13 November 2001.

Above: *Rosa sempervirens* hybrid, name unknown, growing on the Lewes Kell grave at the Mitcham Anglican Cemetery, South Australia, 13 November 2001.



Unidentified rose growing on the roadside verge south of Penwerthan Bridge, in the mid-north of South Australia, 31 October 2001.

need to think what we are losing. We are losing plants that are survivors, plants that have adapted, plants that need little water, plants that were loved, and plants that, once gone, cannot be replaced.

The only cemeteries in Australia that have permanent conservation orders on their old plantings are Rookwood and Gore Hill in New South Wales. This is why I applied for, and was awarded, a Churchill Fellowship in 2002 to travel overseas to study the preservation and conservation techniques and strategies for saving old roses and plants in cemeteries. Destinations included cemeteries and gardens in California, Oregon, Texas, and New Jersey in the USA, gardens in Italy, gardens and cemeteries in France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

During this study tour I observed that no permanent conservation orders on the plantings in cemeteries were in force in any of the countries visited. The plantings in the majority of the cemeteries visited were being maintained by one principal caretaker or by a small, dedicated group of local carers. It was interesting to find there are very active heritage rose societies in the USA, Britain and France but their emphasis has been on growing the old roses and plants in home, public and nursery gardens. The actual retaining of the mother plants has been largely overlooked by most societies.

A number of cemeteries in the USA have management plans that emphasise the historical importance of maintaining and enhancing original plantings. The documenting of all the Oregon Pioneer Cemeteries is leading the

movement toward heritage listing of plantings in all the pioneer cemeteries in the United States. Moreover the marketing of the old roses found in cemeteries has ensured the survival of roses that might otherwise be lost in the USA.

Following my tour I concluded that Rose Gardens worldwide have maintained many varieties of rare old roses and that the roses in these gardens form a wonderful reference source in identifying old rose 'finds'. Most importantly I believe that public awareness of the historical significance of cemetery plantings, and the need to save them for future generations, must to be raised.

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS I SUGGEST:

- \* Establishing an Australia-wide network of local volunteers interested in the conservation and preservation of old plantings in cemeteries.
- \* Investigating the feasibility of setting up a scheme similar to the Master Gardeners Scheme operated in the USA to provide volunteers to work in cemeteries with old plantings.
- \* Propagating and marketing old roses that originated in cemeteries as historical, grown root roses which are able to withstand adverse conditions.
- \* Lobbying to create permanent conservation orders on all cemeteries that have historically and horticulturally significant plantings of roses and other plant varieties.
- \* Writing a book which follows the incredible old rose and plant odyssey and embraces the

roses found, revealing a little of their history, and introducing the wonderful kindred spirits met while on this journey.

While cemeteries are my main focus, the same views can also be applied to most old garden plantings. These are continually threatened by changing fashions in garden design. As we move from the 'cottage garden' to the 'Mediterranean garden', or to the 'native garden' or whatever, old plantings are being removed, bulldozed out so the new owner can start with 'a clean slate'. I suggest that before an old garden is removed, the new owner stands back and looks at what he or she has bought – a little bit of history, a labour of love.

Stand back and 'feel' the garden before doing anything – you may be surprised by what you find. There may be old cultivars of bulbs, roses, violets, camellias, or a multitude of other plant varieties that could be incorporated in the new design. The backbone of the new garden may be before you. Why destroy what you have before 'seeing' what you will lose?

If the final decision is that the garden needs to go, please to contact your local group of Heritage Roses in Australia Incorporated. There are branches of HRA in nearly every state of Australia. A cutting or a piece is all that is needed to perpetuate a rose variety.

Do not assume that roses that have always been at a site – on a roadside, in a cemetery or in a local planting – will always remain there. Do what you can to ensure their survival. One day you may pass by to find that they are no longer there. Rather than thinking 'if only' it is far more satisfying to think 'thank goodness'.



*Patricia Toolan describes herself as a rose conservator, passionate about heritage roses and actively working to preserve old varieties. In August she made a tour of New Zealand speaking on 'Saving Historic Rose Treasures'.*



## REVIEW

### CONSERVING OUR CEMETERIES

*Edited by Celestina Sagazio*

National Trust (Victoria) 2003

ISBN: 0 909710 95 3

RRP: \$29.00

REVIEWED BY NINA CRONE

As Patricia Toolan knows cemeteries do not attract many dollars in terms of government funding or private philanthropy yet they are an important part of our heritage. It is therefore pleasing that the National Trust (Victoria) has funded the publication *Conserving Our Cemeteries* from the proceeds of its popular full moon tours of the Melbourne General Cemetery.

Defining a cemetery broadly as a place of burial, whether a single grave, a known but unmarked grave, or a collective burial area (including that for cremated remains), this book draws together information and guidelines for conservation from many sources.

Garden historians will undoubtedly find Section 7, devoted to plantings associated with burial places and the designed cultural landscapes of large urban cemeteries, of most interest. Here Celestina Sagazio draws on the horticultural expertise of John Hawker and Dr Roger Spencer who provide the plant list for 19th and 20th century cemeteries.



Carefully compiled this comprehensive guide to good conservation practice is attractively illustrated and has sly touches of humour. For families pondering the restoration of ancestral graves it points the way forward offering a wealth of advice on conservation techniques and providing points of expert reference. More importantly it raises awareness of the sorry state of many significant heritage sites.



# FRUITION

DYAN DE WEKKER FROM GEELONG RESPONDED TO THE SUGGESTION THAT READERS SHARE THEIR CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF MUCH LOVED GARDENS.



Household Stories  
from Grimm  
illustrated by Walter  
Crane, 1893



I grew up as a child in an old weatherboard house in a street called Camellia Grove. Unfortunately, we grew no camellias in our suburban front garden. We did, however, have a wonderful apricot tree growing in the backyard, just outside my bedroom window.

It was truly a tree for all seasons. Each morning I would push aside my curtains, open the window wide and greet the new day with my leafy friend. In the evening, when colour had drained away into darkness, the shadowy silhouette of the apricot tree would bid me goodnight as I closed the windows and pulled the curtains together.

In summer, the apricot tree provided me with shade in abundance – somewhere cool to read a comic or drink a glass of cordial. It produced fruit prolifically. My mum made a gallant effort to keep up with the supply. She prepared apricot jam, apricot pie, apricot pudding, apricot strudel, apricot puree, apricot fruit salad, apricot crumble, apricot ice cream, apricot yoghurt and brandied apricots. Sadly, I was not allowed to savour the last delicious dish.

Of course apricots were consumed freshly plucked from the tree and bags of apricots were

given to friends, neighbours and relatives. One year I managed to sell boxes of excess apricots to the local greengrocer and that gave my pocket money a mighty boost.

It was late in summer that I looked up into the canopy of the apricot tree and spied a bird's nest. It seemed precariously balanced in a fork high up in the branches. On closer inspection, I discovered the nest to be made from the usual leaves, twigs, hair and feathers. The nest also displayed an unconventional ribbon of blue plastic interwoven with the natural materials, like stripes on a sports car. I felt privileged that a would-be mother had chosen my apricot tree for home.

In autumn the leaves changed colour. No longer wearing a coat of vivid green, the tree relinquished its leaves as they turned mellow yellow, burnished red and crinkly bronze. Sometimes I would sit on my rickety, wooden swing close to the apricot tree and push myself higher and higher, thrusting my legs confidently into the air. I could almost touch the top of the tree, I could almost reach the sky.

I often climbed the apricot tree in winter. Its outstretched arms supported my weight without question and occasionally I would sit on one of its knobbly branches and survey my kingdom. One

time I was convinced I saw a red-back spider crawling towards me. In my haste to escape my would-be attacker, my footing slipped and I fell off my perch, landing gracelessly onto the ground, breaking my arm in two places.

I can remember a year when the winter months had been particularly cold and a light dusting of snow had fallen. The apricot tree had a thin skin of white over its brown skeleton.

With spring came anticipation soon to be rewarded with lovely blossom. I marvelled at the tree's ability to dress itself in such a delicate way. Not long after, buds and green shoots would emerge to herald a new leafy crown for the apricot tree. This annual cycle seemed to continue effortlessly which was reassuring to me as a child.

Then one day, soon after the apricot tree had received a light pruning, it showed signs of ill health – green leaves fell weakly to earth, twigs and branches looked lifeless and slowly, gradually, the apricot tree died. I now know that senescence comes to all living things but at the time I was devastated by the loss. I had learnt, at a young age, that what can bring you so much joy can equally give you as much sorrow.



*A teacher by training, Dyan de Wekker lives in Geelong where she studied horticulture and became interested in garden history through work as a volunteer at the National Trust property, Barwon Grange. Dyan is currently undertaking a course in cultural resources management.*

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

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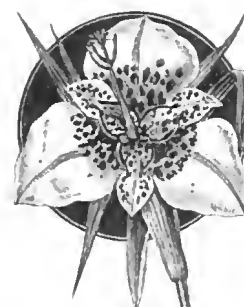
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\*Donations: The Australian Garden History Society is affiliated with the Australian Council of National Trusts and is thereby able to benefit from the Trusts' tax deductible status. Donations are welcome and should be made payable to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and forwarded to the AGHS, Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne 3004.

Membership benefits: Receipt of the Society's official journal *Australian Garden History* 6 times a year. Garden related seminars and conferences. Lectures and garden visits. Opportunity to contribute to preserving gardens for posterity through working bees and advocacy.



# ITEMS of INTEREST



## ANOTHER FIRST

The first edition of *Studies in Australian Garden History* was launched in the historic Brisbane Club on 11 July during the Annual National Conference. It gives scholars the opportunity to publish refereed papers on research subjects pertinent to 'garden history' in the broadest sense. The publication was made possible through the benefaction of Joan Law-Smith and the establishment of the Kindred Spirits Fund, as well as by the support of the scholarly community who contributed articles or reviewed the work of their peers. The project has long been the personal project of Colleen Morris and she and her co-editor Max Bourke deserve congratulations on bringing it to fruition in such fine form.

## GRANT FOR GRACEMERE

Those who heard Laura Emmison's paper at the Brisbane Conference will share the Queensland Branch's pleasure in receiving a \$10,000 grant to provide a conservation plan for the historic complex and gardens at Gracemere Homestead, outside Rockhampton. The money came from the third round of the Community Cultural Heritage Incentive Program. It augments the grant of \$1,000 previously received from the Australian Open Gardens Scheme for work at Gracemere.

## GARDENS HISTORY TO BE FILMED

Ruth Frost, who is lecturer at the University of Tasmania's School of Arts, has won a \$16,000 grant from the Australia Council to complete a project of bringing the history of Hobart's Royal Botanical Gardens to life. She will spend the next 12 months filming parts of the gardens and recording people recalling their memories in the gardens. Dr Frost's aim is to make the gardens more personal. 'I really want people to have a sense of the intimacy of the place', she said.

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 23rd Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society will be held in Mueller Hall at the Herbarium, Melbourne, on Monday 13 October 2003 at 7pm. There will be one vacancy on the National Management Committee to be filled at the AGM. Current Chairman, Peter Watts, is standing down due to work commitments.

## DONATIONS TO AGHS

The Society is affiliated with the Australian Council of National Trusts and is therefore able to benefit from the Trust's tax deductible status. Donations are welcome for the General Fund and also for the Kindred Spirits Fund. The latter was established in 1999 to foster the scholarly, literary and artistic aspects of the Society.

Donations for either fund should be made payable to the National Trust of Australia (Vic.), with a special request that they be spent in a manner determined by the AGHS.

## SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Webmaster Lee Tregloan is hard at work extending the AGHS web-site. Members can observe progress as additional pages are added to the newly designed site by logging on to [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au).

## POWERFUL PACKING

The packers turned up in force for the last mail-out when *Studies in Australian Garden History* was included with the journal. Extra assistance from young Claire and Emily Stokes was greatly appreciated. Thanks to them and to Beryl Black, Jane Bunnay, Di Ellerton, Jane Johnson, Beverley and John Joyce, Helen Page, Sandi Pullman, Kaye Stokes, John and Sandra Torpey and Georgina Whitehead the task was speedily done.



# DIARY DATES

## SEPTEMBER

### 13-21 Saturday to Sunday week

*Throughout New South Wales - History Week 2003 'Minding the Past' will explore the complex processes of remembering and forgetting, the fine balance of conserving, managing and accessing history, and the necessity of engaging with the past for our future. Further information from Roslyn Burge on (02) 9385 1070 or on web-site [www.historycouncilnsw.org.au](http://www.historycouncilnsw.org.au).*

### 17 Wednesday

*Victoria, East Melbourne - Working Bee at Bishops court. Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

*Victoria, Melbourne - Forum: the Gardens of Edna Walling - speakers will include Trish Dixon and Heritage Victoria personnel who will describe the process and progress on the listing of Walling gardens on the Victorian Heritage Register. Time: 7.30pm Venue: Mueller Hall, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: \$12 (AGHS members) \$16 (non-members). Enquiries: Nigel Higgins on 0421 008 003.*

### 20 Saturday

*Victoria, Bickleigh Vale - Tour and Tea at Bickleigh Vale. For members only this occasion is limited to 40 people. Booking: \$25 to Victorian Branch Treasurer, John Isbel, 9 Bickleigh Vale Road, Mooroolbark 3138. Enquiries: Nigel Higgins on 0421 008 003.*

### 21 Sunday

*Sydney, Vauchse House - Wisteria Day 2003 - At 10.30am Peter Valder will discuss Wisteria sinensis and other varieties, their oriental origins and applications. Refreshments will be China teas and speciality cakes. Cost: \$15 members/concessions, \$20 general. Bookings (02) 9518 6866.*

### 24-28 Wednesday to Sunday

*New South Wales, Sydney - 'Sydney in Bloom' - a festival of gardens in the Domain. Further information from Malcolm Wilson on (02) 9810 7803.*

### 27 Saturday

*Victoria, Bulla - Working Bee at Glenara (Melways 177 C9). Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

## OCTOBER

### 5 Sunday

*Victoria, Colac & Birregurra - Guilfoyle in the Colac Area. Join the Victorian Branch in celebrating the centenary of William Guilfoyle's work in this part of the state with visits to the Colac Botanic Gardens, Mooleric and Turkeith. Bus or self drive. Cost: Self Drive \$45 (AGHS members) \$55 (non-members). Bus: \$62 (AGHS members) \$70 (non-members). Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

### 11 Saturday & 12 Sunday

*Victoria, Melbourne - Spring Plant Sale - the Growing Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 10am to 3pm. Entry from Gate E, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra (Melway 2L B2). Enquiries (03) 9836 2862.*

### 13 Monday

*Victoria, Melbourne National AGM 7.15pm, followed by a Lecture 'Walter and Marion Burley Griffin and their Melbourne Influences' given by Christopher Vernon from the Faculty of Landscape and Visual Arts, University of Western Australia. Venue: Mueller Hall, South Yarra. Time: 8pm. Cost \$12 (\$16 non-members). Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

### 15 Wednesday

*Victoria, Melbourne - Working Bee at Bishops court. Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

### 18 Saturday

*Victoria, Daylesford - Working Bee at Wombat Park (Vic Roads 59 71D). Helen Page (03) 9397 2260*

### 24-28 Friday to Tuesday

*Victoria, Geelong - 'Botanic Gardens: Engaging their Communities', the inaugural congress of Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand (BGANZ), will examine the contemporary issues facing Botanic Gardens and Arboreta in Australasia. For information and a registration form contact Geelong Botanic Gardens, PO Box 104, Geelong 3220, or (03) 5227 0387. [bganz@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:bganz@geelongcity.vic.gov.au)*

## NOVEMBER

### 5 Wednesday

*Victoria, Melbourne - Lecture by Rosamund Wallinger 'The Hands-On Experience of Restoring a Gertrude Jekyll Garden'. Time: 8pm. Venue: Mueller Hall, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: AGHS Members \$12, Non-members \$16. Details from Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

### 13 Thursday

*New South Wales, Sydney Rosamund Wallinger, author of Gertrude Jekyll's Lost Garden, will speak on Gertrude Jekyll - her legacy to today's gardeners. Time: 6.30pm. Venue: Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$12 AGHS members, \$16 others. Details: Robin Lewarne on (02) 9953 1916.*

### 15-16 Saturday-Sunday

*Victoria, Coldstream - Open Rose Garden Weekend at Nieuwesteeg Rose Nursery, 4 Tarrawarra Road, Coldstream (Melways 276/B6). Time: 9am to 4pm. Admission: \$5 adults, \$3.50 pensioners, \$2 children. Further details (03) 9819 9922.*

### 16 Sunday

*Sydney and Northern NSW, Northern Beaches - Pittwater Afternoon - a garden tour and walk. For further information contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995.*

### 19 Wednesday

*Victoria, Melbourne - Working Bee at Bishops court. Helen Page (03) 9397 2260.*

### 15-16 Saturday-Sunday

*Southern Highlands - Weekend Garden Visits including a visit to Woomargama Station, Holbrook, the garden of Margaret Darling, Patron of the Society. Enjoy amongst other delights the formal rose garden in full bloom. Bookings essential - Margaret Langley (02) 4861 1519 or Kate Madden (02) 4861 6845.*

### 29-30 Saturday-Sunday

*Victoria, Melbourne - Bishops court - 10am to 4.30pm at 120 Clarendon St, East Melbourne. Garden Open for Australia's Open Garden Scheme. Helen Page (03) 9397 2862.*



## The Mallee, Mildura and Mungo

BY SUE CLABBURN

On Anzac Day 46 enthusiastic AGHS members set off from Melbourne with Rodger and Gwen Elliot as guides. Rodger and Gwen's expertise on Australian flora, their wide knowledge of history, geology, an ability to ferret out local people doing extraordinary things and their endless patience in answering endless questions makes a journey with them a memorable event.

This was a five-day adventure, travelling through mallee country. We visited Walpeup Dry Country Memorial Garden – a celebration of the knowledge that a park is beautiful with eucalypts, grevilleas, eremophilas (emu bush) and dry or salt tolerant plants chosen for their adaptation to a harsh environment.

Then to Pink Lakes National Park – dry, salt-encrusted lakes shining in the sun, fringed with salt-tolerant melaleucas and saltbush; beautiful – and we vowed to return. The bird life was too good for such a short stop. Our motel in Mildura was conveniently opposite Stephano's restaurant! This we also experienced with great enjoyment.

On to Ned's Corner, a degraded property once part of the Kidman empire but recently acquired by the Victorian Trust for Nature and now awaiting revegetation. It has a 35km Murray River frontage and is a precious resource

now in good hands. Next, the Millawa Memorial Garden and Heritage Village at Meringur, where families had planted trees to commemorate their forebears. All work was voluntary and farmers donated early buildings, cottages, a school, or farm machinery showing the early pioneers' heroic efforts to settle in the harsh environment.

A near-dawn walk to the Mildura sewage ponds kept us all glued excitedly to our binoculars. The diversity of water birds and raptors was astounding, and it was very beautiful with the early morning light on the billabongs. We were pleased to learn that bird-hides will soon be built and the area will be open to the public.

We went to Mungo National Park, via the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens, well worth a visit. Only 8 years old and established with private funds from the Mildura/Wentworth area, the Gardens include a range of native plants from both arid and higher rainfall areas as well as exotic plantings suitable for the climate. We rode in a tractor-train, the driver one of the founders of the Gardens, guiding us with passion. So many of the people we met on the trip were passionate about their projects.

Then, Mungo National Park, part of the World Heritage area of the Willandra

Lakes, selected in recognition of its Aboriginal heritage and the evidence of past climates preserved in its landscapes. And what landscapes! Extensive dry lake beds 20-30kms long, ringed with sand dunes in which the burial sites of Mungo man have been found – the oldest recorded cremations in the world. Plants cling to extraordinary dune shapes, sculpted by wind and weather. Ancient Aboriginal hearths, middens of large mussel shells, bones and fragments of emu eggs, unearthed by rain or wind, are easy to find. It is indeed a special place: a photographer's and an artist's delight.

The journey home was via Piangil where another passionate plantsman, a farmer who had fallen in love with eremophilas and learned to propagate them, holds the OPCAA Eremophila Collection. Finally, a stop at Marilyn Sprague's Goldfields Revegetation Nursery near Bendigo: a fitting way to round-off the trip.

*Sue Clabburn gardens enthusiastically in Daylesford, is a regular participant in AGHS working bees and a Friend of Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens in whose newsletter this account first appeared.*